



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAYOR JERRY SANDERS FACT SHEET

SAN DIEGANS GIVEN CHANCE TO KEEP THE HOME-FIRES BURNING

Fire Pit Program Created to Keep San Diego Tradition Alive

The city of San Diego today announced the kick-off of its Fire Pit Program, which gives San Diegans the opportunity to keep beach fire pits, a cherished pastime, alive for years to come.

The program, managed by the city's Corporate Partnership Program, was established as an alternative to the Council-approved pit removal in December 2008.

To maintain the 186 pits located on Mission Bay and in La Jolla, Mission Beach, Pacific Beach and Ocean Beach, the city hopes to receive \$173,000 in annual contributions.

That amount is the cost to the city's Park and Recreation Department for servicing the pits, which must be regularly cleaned of ash and debris to protect the health and safety of beach users. The cleaning process requires two employees, using a front loader and a dump truck, and takes an average of 30 minutes for each fire pit.

The pit removal was among numerous steps taken by the City Council last year to close a mid-year budget shortfall. This mid-year reduction eliminated the entire program.

Soon after city staff began removing the pits, the Park and Recreation Department received an anonymous donation of \$259,500; the amount necessary to keep the fire pits on the city's beach and shoreline properties until June 2010--or for 18 months. To preserve the donor's anonymity, the funds were administered to the city through The San Diego Foundation.

Upon receiving the donation, the city immediately replaced the fire pits.

If \$173,000 is donated to the Fire Pit Program by December 15, 2009, there will be enough funding to ensure the program's inclusion in the Mayor's proposed fiscal year 2011 budget (which covers July 2010 through June 2011).

In the event that deposits made to the program do not reach an amount sufficient to keep the program in the budget, donors will be notified in writing and offered the opportunity to seek a refund.

The city's Corporate Partnership Program will oversee the funds donated, all of which can be monitored by the public on the department's website,
<http://www.sandiego.gov/philanthropycenter>.

As part of the website, the city is asking fire pit lovers to submit family photos taken during activities around the fire pits. The photos will be displayed on the fire pit page.

For more information about the Fire Pit Program and other fundraising opportunities, please contact Jenny Wolff at 619-236-7002 or jwolff@sandiego.gov.

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